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GRANDMOTHER STORIES

BY

IDA HAMILTON MUNSELL



For
President Wilson
(if he will
accept the
same.)

Ida Hamilton Munroe
775-2 Lagoon Ave
Chicago Ill,
Mch 30d 1919



IDA H. MANSSELL.

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GRANDMOTHER STORIES

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BY

IDA HAMILTON MUNSELL

IN THREE PARTS :

GRANDMOTHER'S ROOM
WITHERED ROSE-LEAVES
GRANDMOTHER'S ATTIC

CHICAGO

MUNSELL PUBLISHING CO.

1915

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PREFACE

These "Grandmother" stories are dedicated to the members of the General Henry Dearborn Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Chicago, Illinois, of which Mrs. Louis K. Torbet was the organizer and of which she is regent.

I take pleasure likewise in dedicating the six original songs mentioned in these stories to the same chapter, of which I have the honor to be a member.

IDA HAMILTON MUNSELL.

Chicago, Illinois, February, 1915.

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PART I

GRANDMOTHER'S ROOM

“FOND Memory brings the light of other days around me.” Listen with closed eyelids and an ear attuned not to the city's clamorous noises, but to the calm of a New England country homestead, while with words, instead of brush, we attempt to paint a picture of bygone times.

Imagine a farm of many undulating acres, seven miles from a town; a house of brick with colonial pillars, set upon a knoll where grew three-century old elms; a well with its old-time “sweep” and oaken bucket, not far from the front door; barns, three in number, and stored to the point of bursting with the season's crops, all down the hill a little to the south; night approaching and in the windows of the substantial residence, lights glimmering here and there. It is supper time upon the farm “Elmhurst,” as it is known for miles around. The family gathered about the table, which stands in the massive kitchen extending entirely across the back of the house, includes Father, Mother,

Grandmother, Aunt Jane and a large family of children beside the hired men, four in number, and the maid-of-all-work. What a family was that, my countrywomen!

The rag carpet upon the floor is a product of the great loom standing under the rafters of the upper room. The beams overhead are dark with age and from them hang bags containing many kinds of dried berry and other fruit. Every article of food upon the bountifully spread table has been the result of home labor. Dream of it, you city women, who buy at the delicatessen shop, and who order enough for one meal at a time. Salt-rising and Boston brown bread; golden butter from the herd of cattle browsing in the lower pasture; poached eggs, and pressed chicken; great mealy baked potatoes served with cream; red raspberry jam; tea and milk, and pound cake to be eaten with peach sauce canned in great golden hemispheres in a syrup as clear as amber.

Filled to repletion the group push back their chairs, the head of the family takes the leather-bound Bible from the clock shelf, where it had rested also in his father's time, and slowly and reverently he reads the Twenty-third Psalm. One of the girls goes to the melodion and plays "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Then silently, all bow the knee, even the dog and the

cat, from constant association with this custom, assume quiet postures from which they never move till the long prayer is ended by a sonorous "Amen," in which each person joins.

As they rise and pause for a second, you will notice that every article of clothing worn, unless the shoes be excepted, is the product of the women's work, and you will be reminded that as they retire to rest a little later, they will sleep upon beds, the feathers for which were plucked, the ticks made and filled, by these same active women. They will sleep between sheets and under blankets, patchwork quilt and coverlid, likewise the work of their industrious hands. Think again what it meant, to card and spin, to weave, cut, fashion and sew until the fleece of the flock became clothing for an entire family. To preserve, conserve, and cure; to bake, to clean, and for a pastime, to knit stockings. Surely no housewife need be accused of laziness who lived and worked in these pioneer days.

At length the hired men walk over to their special corner of the kitchen, there to repair a couple of yokes which must be in readiness for the morrow's work. The farmer himself waits until his favorite place is cleared for him, then takes his spectacles and Pilgrim's Progress, puts his stockinged feet upon a second chair, and leans back in the feather-cushioned depths

of his beloved Boston rocker for an hour's rest before he turns in. The mother, Aunt Jane, and the hired girl proceed to "do up" the work for the night, while Grandmother, dear soul, kisses her "big boy" and patters, in her soft crocheted slippers, out into the sunny south room, on the first floor, which has been reserved for her special domicile ever since her husband, who had planned and built the home, had completed the task. "Father," as she called him, had not lived many months to enjoy the home he had dreamed of so long. The son had married and naturally the responsibility of the farm rested upon his strong shoulders, but "Mother's room" had never been interfered with or changed. Everybody loved to enter it, but nobody crossed the threshold unless its mistress said, "come in." The large square room with its big windows opening to the south and filled with flowers, was Grandmother's castle. There, at any rate, she reigned as queen. Tonight three candles aflame on top of the dresser, make the room but faintly alight; a wood fire burns on the hearth, a Sleepy Hollow chair invites, and Grandmother settles down by the fireplace with a sigh of content. Can you not hear the song she is softly humming, "When Troubles Assail and Dangers Affright," and again, a little later, "Loose the Cable, Let Me

Go"? A Bible and Baxter's "Saints' Rest" are placed upon an inlaid mahogany table convenient to her hand, but her spectacles are laid aside, and the soft blue eyes are seeing pictures in the flames. Grandmother is dreaming of "Auld Lang Syne."

Meanwhile we will look about us a wee bit; first, at the gown she wears of soft gray wool, at the fichu of blonde net folded in plaits at the open neck and pinned with a cameo and diamond brooch of antique workmanship, the gift of a king; then at the lace cap upon her soft white hair, parted in the middle, drawn back loosely over the ears, and held at the back with an almost priceless tortoise shell comb. A bunch of keys hangs from her side, and her crochet-work lies, for the moment, unheeded on her lap.

Little footsteps patter up the hall. Jamie and Susie, the twins, have come to get their nighties buttoned, and to kneel at Grandmother's side while she aids the petitions beginning with "God bless Papa and Mamma," helping them all adown the line, till even the old shepherd dog and the big cat are included in the prayers. Then Grandmother takes the baby who has toddled into the room, upon her lap and rocking slowly, while the old chair creaks in musical sympathy, the dear old voice sings a "bye-low" tune till the little one is fast asleep. Big Sister

comes in opportunely and carries her off to bed, then she too comes back, brings the flax wheel up beside the fire, and with many a blush tells Grandmother of her quarrel with "Bob," who had been her sweetheart since first they trudged the long mile in company which eventually brought them to the little red country school-house. Grandmother smooths the girl's blond braids, gives her much comforting advice and sends her, happy, back to the other room. Willy, the oldest boy, comes in to ask, "How would you manage old Sukey, Grandmother? She won't mother her calf." Here too the little woman suggests and relieves the situation. The family dog has crept slyly in, and his tail thumps and wags whenever he hears his master's voice. At length the pair, boy and dog, reluctantly leave the room, only to make place for ten-year-old Margaret, who wants to know, "How many times does eight go in twenty-four, Grandmother?" She has ten "sums" to do and she sits tailor-fashion on her feet before the fire, till, with Grandmother's help, all are explained and worked out on the slate. Mother taps upon the door. "Time for bed, Margaret," she calls. "I'd like to come in with you folks, but I've got sponge to set and cream to skim yet," she says as she bustles away. Little ten-year-old rubs her eyes, gets the kinks out of her legs and with

"You're a perfect darling, thank you so much for helping with the hateful old things," she too is up and away.

Aunt Jane enters on an errand. Let us look at her. She is a tall, angular woman, who wears a "chignon" when she goes to church. In the spring, summer and autumn, she always bedecks her hair with flowers, arranged as a sort of head-dress about the wonderful structure at the back. She always carries a bunch of carraway, and beside her chair, in her own room, stands a sewing table, upon which, together with the work-basket, there always is to be found a blue willow saucer of small size, holding raisins, cloves and peppermints. Aunt Jane always complained of "a bad taste in her mouth," and these dainties were supposed to be a specific. Aunt Jane tonight wears a rose-sprigged delaine, of which she is very fond. Rumor has it that once upon a time a lover brought it to her from across the seas. Picture Aunt Jane with a lover! Harsh, unbending, angular, straight as a board, bustless, hipless, drab in tone and awkward in manner, what man could admire her? At fifty-six, though, one cannot always look as one did at eighteen. Perhaps even Aunt Jane had dimples and curves and color when the mystic lover claimed her heart. She potters about the room now, much to Grandmother's annoyance,

for, although over eighty, Grandmother is still plump and fair, and a remarkably "spry" old lady who is never awkward in her movements.

"Goodnight, daughter," Grandmother says at length. The door closes with a squeak, but the mistress of the room soon remedies this by the application of a bit of goose oil, manipulated by means of a feather. Grandmother goes back to the fire upon which Aunt Jane had recently placed a huge chunk of seasoned wood. The high grandfather's clock ticked lazily—"don't fret, don't fret"—as it seemingly had always done for years and years. Grandmother looked at the clock with a smile. "I can't help it, she makes me nervous," she said aloud.

Sounds about the house grew fainter and fainter and lights were gradually extinguished, till all were asleep but Grandmother, who loved this hour the best of all. She stirred up the flames, wheeled a tip table beside the fireplace, got out pen and ink and began writing reminiscences of pioneer days. The foolscap pages were laid in a neat pile, the penmanship was legible and regular, the style of composition good, and the theme one which was to become of great interest and value in the years to come. Grandmother didn't know this. She just wrote for the love of it, thinking, "mayhap the chil-

dren will find it 'good reading,' " after she was dead and gone.

Grandmother's life had been full of varied and wonderful experiences. Always active mentally, she wrote as interestingly as she talked. It was a great treat to hear her tell of crossing the country to California, and of how, as recently as 1852, she had crossed the Isthmus of Panama, on the first passenger train. The road at that time was only partially completed and so she had finished the trip on the back of a mule. All these memories thronged her mind as the busy pen tried to keep abreast of her thoughts.

Growing weary of sitting still Grandmother walked over to her piano, selecting a song in original manuscript, written by her own hand, she seated herself at the instrument and, using the soft pedal, began to play and quietly sing:

"My love was out in the garden,
Under the Almond Tree,
All in the blush of blossom
That grows for the honey bee.
I came up over the daisies,
Before she could look and see;
I caught her hand and kissed it,
Under the Almond Tree."

She sang only the first verse lest she disturb the family.

"How Father loved that melody of mine! I

wonder can he hear it now?" she thought wistfully. Was it tears in her eyes, or was the room really darker than usual? she asked herself.

The candles spluttered and had to be snuffed. Grandmother went to the "highboy," opened a drawer and took out two more tallow candles, but lately fresh from the tin moulds filled by her own hand. She got two brass candlesticks from the mantel and when the new illumination was added, the room took on quite a festive air. It was only 10 o'clock. Supper is early on the farm. Grandmother turned the key softly in the lock. She didn't wish to be scolded for this hilarity, this turning the night into day. The children would seriously object if they knew. They would think it "bad for her health," but she "guessed she knew what was good for a body," and she "hadn't reached the stage where she needed a guardian just yet." She went placidly and happily back to her writing.

At 11:30 she gathered her manuscript together, hid all traces of her recent labors, covered the fire for the night, and proceeded leisurely to disrobe. In one corner, between two windows, stood the massive four-poster bed of solid hand-carved mahogany, disdained by her grandchildren, yet a possession of great worth if they only knew. It had been in her childhood's home, so she loved it. There was a tester

and curtains and valances, all of rich red damask. The bed was heaped mountain high with first a tick of corn husks, then two huge feather beds, over which were the usual number of patchwork quilts. One, a tulip design, beautifully quilted, was Grandmother's special pride. Hadn't she put it on the frames, spent three months sewing in the elaborate design, removed it, bound it, marked it with her name? Hadn't she a right to be proud? The coverlid was a beauty in cream flax and scarlet wool. It weighed fourteen pounds. George Washington, in all his glory, bestrode a spirited horse in the center, while birds with wonderful plumage, and vases of huge roses occupied each corner. The date of 1814 was woven on one edge, as was likewise Grandmother's name. This had been a gift from a governor of great renown in the colonies. At the foot of the bed stood the steps necessary to climb before one could repose amid all these glories. And in a corner near by rested the hooded mahogany cradle in which all of the children of her blood, for a hundred years, had been rocked to sleep.

The old clock gave a sudden whirring sound, then its tune changed and it began to tick, "eat a bite, eat a bite." Grandmother looked up with sudden interest. She surely was hungry. How well the old clock knew her needs! She

threw a flowered-chintz dressing-gown about her still plump shoulders, and in her stocking feet, pattered slyly out into the buttery, where, hidden in a copper wash-boiler—a wooden partition of Aunt Jane's invention separating the two goodies—she knew she would be sure to find molasses cookies and doughnuts. "Aren't you afraid of indigestion, Grandmother? At your time of life one ought to go easy, you know."

Perhaps the little woman imagined some whisper of disapproval of her act, for she shrugged her shoulders and set her teeth firmly in the delectable pastry. "I can't die but once, and then not till my time comes," Grandmother told herself, and she ate her fill with relish and a clear conscience. There was cider nearby in a Wedgwood pitcher; she filled a mug and drank thirstily.

Back in her own quarters she began once more to prepare for bed. The old clock whirred and purred like a giant pussy cat and this time it sang, "sleepy time, sleepy time," till its mistress yawned in sympathy. She brushed out her still abundant hair, braided it as she had always done since a wee girl, put on a lace-trimmed spotless cap and gown, snuffed out the candles, then in the soft firelight said the "Now I lay me," which she had never outgrown.

Rising from her devotions, she went to a brass-

studded, hair-covered trunk, lifted the lid, took out a daguerrotype of "Father," taken when, at twenty-four, he had first come into her life. She raised the pictured face very tenderly to her lips, a sob caught her throat, two big tears rolled unheeded down her cheeks. "Don't think you are forgotten, sweetheart of the years," she said softly, as if to one whose ears could hear. "You are always with me, loved one. Every day I wish you a good morning. Every night when the light goes out, I send you my goodnight. Some women forget I know, dear, but you will always fill my heart." She raised the picture once again to her soft, old lips. "Goodnight, sweetheart, goodnight," she whispered low. She crossed the room, laid "Father's" picture on the pillow next her own, then she climbed the steps, settled contentedly down amid the luxurious covers and closed her eyes.

A fragment of verse came into her head, "God and his angels will take care of you, of you, of y-o-u." A coal dropped on the hearth, the big clock ticked on, but Grandmother heeded neither. She had gone to the Land of Dreams.

PART II

WITHERED ROSE-LEAVES

GRANDMOTHER had just come in from the garden. She was all in white: she had a bunch of forget-me-nots pinned on her breast. She carried a big Indian bread basket heaped high with roses she had just clipped from the bushes; they were sparkling with scattered rain-drops from a recent summer shower. She came in by the rear door, and, as she went through the big kitchen she took a package of odorous spices from the table, then passed on into her own quarters and closed the door. Grandmother gave a gentle little sigh, but she went on with her self-imposed task. Taking an exquisitely woven linen sheet from a wardrobe of massive mahogany, she spread it in the center of her bed, then she emptied her roses thereon, picking up an especially beautiful blossom ever and anon to inhale its delicious fragrance. There was the faintest of pink tint on her cheeks, and occasionally a tear in the eyes of blue, for she was thinking of other days and of other roses,

the while she pulled the leaves apart, and scattered them to dry. An urn of old Chinese pottery stood on the highboy. Grandmother glanced at it from time to time, at length crossed over and took it in her hands, lifted the lid and bent her head to inhale the subtle odor emanating from the jar. The room was now flooded with sunshine and filled with fragrance from the fresh roses and the withered leaves of the potpourri in the urn. Grandmother set the jar back in its accustomed place, but she left the cover off, bending her head once more to inhale the delicious scent, before she crossed the room to her harp, an instrument manufactured especially for herself before she gave up concert work and settled down on this farm. On a rack, in manuscript form, was a new song, upon which she had been working that day, giving it the title of "Withered Roses." She seated herself and began to play and sing:

"My quaint old room discloses
Withered rose-leaves in an urn.
Everywhere our glances turn,
Roses withered now, and dead,
All their ancient sweetness fled.
Oh, the pain these memories give.
All the warmth is chill, today.
All the life has passed away,
Naught is left but rose-leaves,
Withered rose-leaves, in an urn."

“My quaint old room discloses
Ashes of Life’s roses,
Hopes and loves, now lost or dead,
And our dreams of life all fled.
O’er the urn I bend and feel
A faint fragrance from it steal,
Like the past which comes no more,
Like all vanished moments sweet,
Naught’s now left but rose-leaves,
Withered rose-leaves in an urn.”

The music died away in a minor chord of exquisite sweetness and sadness. Grandmother’s head bent forward towards her breast, but a brisk tap, tap, at her door warned her she had no time to indulge in useless repining.

The twins entered; Jamie and Susie were a jolly pair; nobody could indulge in “the blues” long when in their company. The baby came toddling in. “Make baby dolly, Dranma,” she commanded, and Grandmother took a white linen apron from the highboy and pinned it into semblance of a doll.

“Baby wants eyes in dolly!” the little tot demanded, so quickly black buttons were sewed in place, and baby, content, cuddled up in Grandmother’s lap.

“Now tell us a story about the nasty Injuns, Grandmother,” pleaded Jamie, but Susie, less blood-thirsty, said: “No, not ’bout Injuns, Grandma, but ’bout when you was a little girl like me.”

"I guess that's better," Grandmother agreed. "I don't feel like telling 'fighting stories' today, Jamie dear."

"All right, sir. Anything you say goes here," consented the boy. Grandmother was thoughtful for a moment. "This is a pretty room, this 'ere one of yours. Grandmother, did you have one as nice when you was a little girl?" Jamie demanded, growing tired of enforced silence. Grandmother laughed softly.

"Would you like me to tell of my home as I remember it when I was about your age, twinnies?" she asked. Both children gave a delighted assent. Jamie stood in front of the fireplace, hands behind his back in mannish attitude. Susie sat in a tiny rocker, which had been Grandmother's own, and the baby nestled in her lap sleepily cuddling the apron doll. Jamie chewed on a straw in imitation of big brother Willy; his legs were very far apart, and his red-topped boots very much in evidence; he tried manfully to be patient with Grandmother, but he shared the common masculine idea of supremacy with many of his sex.

"Females is so slow," he was just thinking, when Grandmother's softly modulated voice broke the silence.

"You asked about my childhood home, dears," she said. "Well, it wasn't much of a house, I

suppose you'd say, Jamie, but we thought it pretty comfortable in those days. We had only two rooms at first. The large 'living room' where we all ate and slept and worked, and a 'lean-to' where we cooked in summer time, and where the hired men and the boys slept. In one corner of the big room was a great four-poster bedstead, heaped high with feather beds; under this was a little trundle-bed in which the smallest children slept. It was pulled out at night so mother could 'tuck us in' if we got uncovered. A big loom, on which mother and big sister wove, during daytime, occupied another corner of the room, and in the third stood a big mahogany cupboard filled with dishes of old blue, and pewter which we took turns in keeping bright. The floor was made of boards a foot wide, but mother kept it covered with carpets and rugs of her own make. You think *you* have to work hard sometimes, twinnies, but you ought to have seen *me* sew carpet-rags, and long seams on sheets, and make patch-work for quilts and sew 'samplers.' Mother always said, 'Satan finds mischief for idle hands,' and she gave him little chance to get after *her* children, I can tell you. From the ceiling hung great strings of dried apples, rings of pumpkin, red peppers, corn and onions, with bunches of catnip and mullein to use in case of sickness. Then in those days we had

no soap but the kind we make *now* but once a year, with lye and grease, in the big kettle out at the back. We all worked hard at sugar time, when father 'tapped' the maple trees and we gathered the sap and cooked it over an open fire into rich syrup and hardened into nice cakes, from which we cut pieces to sweeten our tea and coffee, which last mother made out of parched corn and wheat. Then there were days when we made the tallow candles. At first we dipped the string many times in the grease, but later we had 'moulds' and made them much easier after that, as you children know, for you've helped Grandmother make them yourselves, haven't you, twinnies?" she paused to ask.

"Yes, sir-ee, Bob," Jamie said proudly.

"Didn't you have any lamps at all, Grandma?" queried Susie.

"Not at first, dearie," was the reply. "Later we had 'grease lamps' like those on the highboy. And as for shoes, we could only get a new pair when 'the cobbler man,' as we called him, made his regular trips into our neighborhood. He stayed at our house often two weeks at a time. I remember he had a fiddle, and used to play for us to dance after the supper dishes and the chores were done. I used to think he was a great man then, and it was he who taught me first how to hold a violin."

"I bet you could have told him somethin' after you went to Paris to learn to play," Jamie vouchsafed grandly, for he did approve with all his heart of the European triumphs which he never tired of hearing rehearsed. Grandmother laughed softly.

"I sent him tickets for a box, at a benefit performance, in New York, one night, and money for his coach hire beside. He was the proudest man in America I guess," she said half to herself. Susie broke in upon her reverie.

"Did your mother make all your dresses, Grandma?" she queried.

"Pretty near all of them, Susie, dear, but we had an old maid in our township, Miss Susan Bean, who came four times a year and helped mother and big sister with the work. She was an awful gossip, and often made trouble between families, but there was nobody else, so we took her when it came our turn."

"Didn't you ever have but one room at your house, Grandma?" Jamie asked rather anxiously. He was particularly proud of "Elmhurst," his father's big substantial farm.

"Oh, yes, dearie. As we grew up my parents added a loft which we reached by means of a ladder. It was cold as Iceland in winter; the snow sifted in and lay in heaps upon our

beds. We had a tin lantern punched full of holes in which a candle burned with a dim light, and we had a horn lantern given father by a ship's captain, one of which hung at either end of the loft. Father had divided the room by hanging up butternut colored curtains my mother had woven with care. It was fun to hear father call my brothers at 4 o'clock of a winter's morning, and to listen to the grunts and groans, as, one after the other, the boys crawled out of the warm feather beds and landed in a small snow drift, his teeth chattering so he could barely crawl into his clothes." Grandma laughed a jolly, happy laugh as she pictured those by-gone days.

The sun had gone behind dark clouds, the wind was blowing a gale, and raindrops splashed against the window pane. The baby was asleep. Aunt Jane, the spinster of the family, came in and carried her away. The twins drew closer to Grandmother's side. Jamie always lost some of his masculine superiority in a thunderstorm. Now he gave a little shiver and laid his head against her knee.

"Didn't you have any good times at all, Grandma, before you went to Paris and got to be a big violin player?" he queried rather wistfully.

"Sure, dear, sure," Grandmother assured

him. "We had paring and husking bees, and quilting bees, and singing schools, and donation parties, and revival meetings, and barn-raising, much as we do now," she said quickly, for she heard footsteps approaching.

"Where's that lazy Jamie?" a big voice inquired. "It's time to feed the hens and gather the eggs, and cut that rhubarb, young man," big brother's voice said, outside the door.

"Spose I've got to go do those tornation chores. A man never *can* take a moment's rest," Jamie said crossly, and the redtopped boots made more than the customary racket as their small owner tramped down the hall. Their mother called Susie, and for the moment Grandmother was alone. She crossed the room to her piano, always her comfort in moments of mental distress. She began to play a song, the music of which was her own.

GOOD BYE, SWEET DAY.

"Good bye, Sweet Day, good bye!
I have so loved thee but I cannot hold thee.
Departing like a dream the shadows fold thee.
Slowly, thy perfect beauty fades away.
Good bye, Sweet Day, good bye.

Dear were thy golden hours of tranquil splendor.
Sadly thou yieldest to the evening tender.
Thou wast so fair from thy first morning's rays,
Good bye, Sweet Day, good bye."

Grandmother, conscious of a presence outside her door, opened it to admit the big daughter of the house, who looked something as the white-haired woman beside her must have looked in her 'teens.

"That's a beautiful song, Grandmother, dearest," the girl said, as she put her arms caressingly about the elder woman's waist. "But it makes me sad, always, and this afternoon saddest of all, I guess, for I've just had another quarrel with Bob, who says I've got to choose pretty soon between him and Jasper. He says I've too many beaux to suit his pleasure. He talks as if he owned me, Grandmother, and I just told him he could saddle his mare and ride along home. It's a pity if a girl can't have all the beaux she likes. Did you want to 'settle down' at my age? You must have had a lot of lovers, Grandma, in your youth, but you never have told me about them. Won't you ask me in now? Can't we sing, 'Just a Song at Twilight,' together, and then cuddle up in Grandfather's big chair for a heart to heart talk?"

Grandmother never refused comfort to any who gave her their confidence, so she closed and locked the door, lighted the pine cones piled high in the fireplace, and pulled the red damask curtains before the windows so that the dreary

storm outside might not force its gloom within her quiet, peaceful room. It was only 5 o'clock but it was dark already, and it took several candles to give the cheerful glow Grandmother felt the occasion demanded.

"You sit down at the piano, dear. I never like to put my hands to the keys when you are anywhere around. Nobody can hope to equal your exquisite touch, your sensitive accompanying," the girl said modestly, a little later, when the pair were ready to sing. The elder woman made a curtsy. "I can't do *that* either. I don't wonder you had your audiences wild with enthusiasm, you dear!" the young lady said admiringly.

Grandmother did look beautiful in the soft lights of the room. Her white dress fell in graceful folds about her erect form; her silvery crown of hair was like a halo above the softly-tender, old face. The "forget-me-nots" had wilted and she replaced them by a half blown pink rose. Nobody would have thought her more than eighty years of age; as the world counts time she was old, but Grandmother in her heart of hearts knew that she possessed that pearl of great price, eternal youth! She knew too that "Love" had given her this boon—this inestimable gift without which she would have been wrinkled and bent and crabbed; care-

less of dress; snuffy and repulsive; a grandmother whose only aim in life was to sit by the fire and knit, or mend, or read, or dream the hours away.

Grandmother seated herself and ran her fingers caressingly over the pearl keys. For just a moment she faltered, for she heard, as if the words were newly spoken: "Nothing *but pearl*, will be good enough for my little song bird's fingers." It was her lover's voice and he was ordering the very instrument upon which she now played.

"I can't, oh I can't go on!" She almost *said* the words, but she saw the girl beside her was furtively wiping her eyes. "Pardon me, girly," she said briskly, "but I'm not so sure we need a sentimental song just at present. Suppose we wait a bit for the music!"

The granddaughter's eyes were still wet but she tried her best to smile. Grandmother crossed the room to where a writing desk of rare Japanese lacquer stood. Once upon a time she had admired it, and the King—its owner—had sent it that same night with his compliments to her hotel. Now she opened the desk and from it took a box of sandalwood inlaid with mother-of-pearl. She pressed a secret spring and the cover flew open disclosing a packet of letters yellow with age, each tied with a dif-

ferent colored ribbon. She took them up and chose the bottom one.

"Read it," she said. "It's good for a fit of the blues on a rainy afternoon." The girl opened the paper and read the opening lines. "Wait a bit," said the older woman. "Let me explain! He was the minister of our village church, a widower with six young children; my father was his best paying member. I was a pretty girl of sixteen. Now you know enough to go on with your reading."

"Honored Miss"—she read, "I have your father's consent to pay you my addresses. As you know, the light of my life has gone out. The inscrutable laws of Providence have stolen my beloved wife from my home. That home with its birdlings cries out for a new mother. I hope, honored Miss, you will consent to be that same. If you favor my suit wear a red rose on your breast to church next Sabbath day.

Your obedient servant,

Obediah Jackson,

Minister of Christ."

The girl's laughter rang out in a silvery peal. "What did you do, dear?" she queried when she could speak.

"*I didn't go to church!*" said Grandmother, as she handed a note tied with orange ribbon

to the other. "I was just getting a reputation in Paris when I received this one," she explained. There was a golden coronet at the top of the page.

"Ladye Fayre:" it began. "This is from your admirer who always sits in the box and throws you the pink rose after your violin solo. I hate the big man who has taught you all you know. My hot Italian blood boils when he commands you to 'play this' or 'play that' as he may select. Fly with me adorable song bird! In my noble palace you shall sing and play for none save noble guests, and at your own sweet will. Your dainty feet were never meant to tread other than rose strewn paths; your proud head would do honor to the coronet I am laying at your disposal. Let me meet you at the consul's house beloved, and adored America-na, at your earliest pleasure. Yours till death

Gregorius."

The girl looked up, a look of awe upon her mobile face. "You let *that* chance go by, dear? Why?" she queried.

"I could not love him, tho' I did admire him," Grandmother said gently.

"And you *chose my Grandfather*, why?" again asked the girl.

The elder woman put back the package of

letters, closed the casket, and locked the desk before she replied.

"At first it was the music," she said softly. "I had composed a theme for the violin. I *heard* what I wanted to play, but I could not get the violin to express my thoughts. The master took the instrument from me. 'Is this what you are striving to say, little pupil?' he inquired. And then, fuller and grander, than I had dreamed it, he played my piece on to the end. It was always so after that—always to the end of his life," she said with a sob. "He was my other half as truly meant for my mate as if God, Himself, had placed signs on us which read—'You two were made for each other.' He read my unspoken thought, he put the music of his beautiful soul into every hour, from that moment when he played my music, child of my brain which refused to be born until his hand held the violin—until that other moment when with tired eyes looking into the great Beyond, he held my hand and whispered, 'I'm only going Home first, my beloved one. I shall wait for you up there. Play *our song*, for me now, my darling, and I shall go away on the wings of the melody which but for us two would never have been created. Play, darling one, play!' And he fell asleep as I played—" Grandmother whispered.

The girl got up without a word. She knelt at the other's feet; kissing the hem of her white robe, she rose softly and tip-toed out of the room, leaving Grandmother with her rose-leaves, withered rose-leaves, in an urn.

PART III

GRANDMOTHER'S ATTIC AND A RESURRECTED STRADIVARIUS

THE light was growing dim in Grandmother's private room. The children's mother, Aunt Jane, and the hired girl were hustling about getting supper. One could smell the delectable goodies when from time to time the oven door was opened.

"I guess I'm hungry, them beans smell mighty good," remarked one of the twins.

"Let's put our playthings away and get ready to eat," said the other, and the pair got up from the floor where they had been quietly playing so as not to disturb Grandmother who had invited them in. As a reward of merit, she had allowed them to play with some toys their mother and Aunt Jane had used when they too were little girls.

"You think lots of these here things, don't you, Grandmother?" queried Jamie as he put a little lead soldier back in the box.

Grandmother looked up, but for a moment she did not reply.

"'Course she does. Buddy, you keep still. Don't you know Grandma is writing one of her tunes?" said Susie. She collected the remainder of the treasures, closed the lid of the chest wherein they were stored, and carefully piloted Jamie out into the hall. "Sometimes, Buddy, I think you haint got much sense," she remarked, as the door closed behind them. "You know them's her bestest things, cause she said so, and you know too, she mustn't be asked questions when 'the spirit moves,' cause Aunt Jane told us that. You've just got to be careful, Buddy, or she won't let us in again till she gets her writing done," his twin said in her most serious tone. "Buddy" made a wry face; he even stuck out his tongue. It was an immature way of trying to express masculine superiority.

"Smarty! I guess you don't know everything! Girls 'aint so much anyhow," he remarked sagely. "What's 'spirit moves' mean, anyhow?" he queried crossly.

Grandmother heard the conversation and opened her door.

"Better be good children, twinnies, or your mother won't let you go to the party tonight," she whispered softly.

This suggestion had the desired effect, and the twins were in a very amicable frame of mind when their mother took them in hand to prepare them for an evening of frolic at their neighbors, five miles adown the road. Grandmother in her secluded room wrote as long as she could see the words—wrote as if inspired. Once again the fever of composition seized her. She got up frequently and crossed the room to where her instrument stood and ran her fingers over the keys to hear the melody she was trying to jot down ere it could elude her active brain. On the rack was a piece of music which reminded her of the first song she had ever composed. Grandmother saw the printed words, "All men beside are to me like shadows—Douglas, Douglas, tender and true." Tears dropped to the pearl keyboard, and the woman's head sunk down upon her breast in utter abandon. After a time, Grandmother went back to her table and resumed her work. She had lighted the candles, and coaxed the fire; her cosy room was aglow. It was almost supper time when she pushed her writing aside with a contented sigh. She walked the length of the room once, twice, thrice. "I guess I'll have time to play it through," she said, then took up the paper upon which she had been working,

went to the piano and was about to touch the keys when—

“I’se dot youse dolly, Dranma.” It was a sweet little voice, but Grandmother looked up startled and dismayed.

“How did you find Grandma’s Dolly, sweetness?” she asked. Then she remembered that she had heard a slight noise when she was looking for something in the attic a short time before, also that she had been called hastily away, and left the trunk unlocked.

“Baby naughty, Dranma?” piped the sweet voice.

“Very, very naughty, baby dear,” the woman said softly, but she gathered baby and rag dolly—the dolly of her own childhood—into the comforting warmth of her arms. “Bye-O-Dolly,” crooned Grandmother. “Bye-Dolly bye—” echoed sleepy head, the precious prohibited Dolly clasped close to her tiny breast. “Dranma sing Baby, ‘Rock-bye-Dolly’ song,” commanded the little tyrant.

Grandmother thought from time to time of her interrupted task, but not at all with regret. Sitting in the big rocker crooning a soft lullaby to the babe, Grandmother’s own childhood unrolled as on a printed scroll before her. The soft little body against her breast, the drowsy crooning—“Rock-bye-Dolly—” how these things

took her memory back to the days beyond recall. "I wish I could put this on paper just as it appears to me, but somehow I can't seem to express myself tonight. I must give it up I suppose." Rising, she laid the now sleeping baby upon her bed. Aunt Jane came to call her to supper. Grandmother held up a warning hand. "Hush," she whispered, and Aunt Jane left the pair alone. Grandmother looked pale and exhausted. Memories of her engagement night of which this was an anniversary, made her feel pitifully old and alone. Crossing the room she got out the daguerreotype which always laid on the second pillow of her bed each night.

"Oh, if you could but help me as you've done so many times before!" she wailed. "I am so helpless, so lost without you, dear! See how I've failed tonight! I've the inspiration, but the divine spark, the soul of it all, eludes my grasp. Oh Master, husband of mine, can you hear my cry for help and let it go unheeded? Come, for my arms are empty." Grandmother's voice ceased, she had fallen face downward upon the bed. Only the tick of the clock and the crackle of the fire was heard in the room. Grandmother never knew how long she lay unconscious, but at length she arose, trimmed the candles, mended the fire and re-

sumed her writing. Her fingers flew fast, and this is what she wrote:

Climbing one day to the attic
In search of olden store,
My little grandchild brought me,
Antiques she had found galore!
Tears came to my eyes unbidden,
And a trace of laughter too,
As the treasures of my girlhood
The child held up to view.

But one precious toy escaped her,
Of this I knew full well;
Under lock and key I kept her,
This old Doll whose tale I tell.
Few there were who knew about her,
Or dreamed of the magic spell
That my girlhood's old rag Dolly
O'er my heart still kept so well.

Father brought her home from Boston
In the spring of forty-four,
She had crossed the sea from England,
"The best Dolly in the store."
To my loving breast I pressed her,
She was all the world to me,
Hungry hearted little "Mother"
Whose age then was only three.

On her head a gay bandana,
Hair of yarn, and beady eyes,
Fat and shapeless as to figure—
Now she'd make gay laughter rise—
But for long my old rag Dolly
Was the chiefest of my joys,
And I'd drop all other playthings
For this, crudest of all toys.

In the years which followed after
There came laughter, there came tears,
There was lover, husband, babies,
And a public wild with cheers.
Sometimes, long she lay forgotten,
But today, though queer it seems,
There's no money that could buy her—
My rag Doll of childhood's dreams.

Do not wonder that I prize her.
Can't you see she typifies
All the freedom of my girlhood,
All that's dearest of dear ties?
Do not laugh because I hide her
In the trunk with tender care,
This forlorn and worn out plaything,
My rag Doll of forty-four.

CHORUS.

My old rag Dolly,
My old rag Doll!
Poor Doll with beads for eyes.
Up in the attic
Underneath the eaves,
My old rag Dolly lies.

Grandmother threw the poem aside.

"It's all right so far as metre is concerned, and it pictures childhood's memories, but it's too long, and it does not show the mystic relation between the baby sleeping there, and the mother-love of the universe, which I am striving to put into song." Grandmother tried twice more, but the results were not satisfactory. The baby awakened. Her first thought was for the pre-

cious plaything. "Sing more 'rock-bye Dolly' Dranma," she commanded, and the woman carried the child to its mother humming softly—

Rock-a-bye Grandmother's Dolly,
Rock-a-bye Dolly bye.

Eight o'clock of the same night, a glorious October night, a night radiant with silver moonbeams, redolent of harvest smells and attune with drowsy insect noises. The front door of the handsome farmhouse on the place called "Elmhurst," stood wide open, the light from the hall outlining the figure of a woman waving her hand in a gesture of "good luck and good-bye" toward the occupants of a big top carriage just turning from the lane into the road proper.

Grandmother stood a moment after her loved ones had disappeared before she stepped out into the moonlight, where her spotless gown of home-made woolen, and the soft crepe shawl with its heavy fringe, showed distinctly against the background of shrubbery near which she paused. She was listening to the faint sound of the horses' hoofs; the laughter, suggestive of gay riders off for an evening's frolic, from which sentiment alone had debarred her, for this, as we know, was the anniversary of her engagement, and she had desired to be left alone

with her memories for guests. She stood looking adown the valley toward the south, whence, silvery with soft shapes of radiance, tall marble monuments marked the quiet acre where the dreamless sleepers lay. Unconsciously she reached out both arms, then let them fall helplessly ere she turned, and, slowly retracing her way, reentered the house.

This, disordered by its departed inmates, ordinarily would have claimed her first attention, but this night Grandmother passed through all the rooms with unseeing eyes. Half unconsciously she found herself in her own chamber, and here, apparently led by some unknown power, she took from a drawer a key, and with it in hand climbed the stairs to an attic room, a room sacred to herself, and to which none other had access, no matter what the excuse. As she entered, she faced a large mirror, hung upon the highest wall. This mirror was a beautiful object, an immense pier glass, framed in solid mahogany. Her children liked new things but Grandmother had always objected to parting with possessions connected with her happy married life. What she could not find place for in her own quarters had accumulated in this attic room, but nothing grotesque resulted, for order and cleanliness were as natural to Grandmother as was the act of breathing. Sometimes it

seemed as if the little woman was possessed of prophetic vision, as, for instance, when she told Aunt Jane, "If you live long enough, daughter, you will see how silly 'twould be to let these heirlooms go. There's bound to be somebody who'll want 'em for their value as history, and to preserve the custom of our times. You can have the new-fangled things all you can afford to, only don't ask me to part with chairs and tables and dishes which are just as good today as they were in my great-grandmother's time, and that with proper care will be just as good one hundred years from now."

In the winter this attic room was like an ice-house; in summer it was hot as an oven, but during spring and fall, Grandmother spent her every spare hour among her treasures of wood, and silver and china and lace, of wool and flax, of jewelry and chests of clothes, all relics of a happy and unforgotten past.

"I'm glad I saved 'em! Somebody'll found a museum of historical antiques some day, and then they'll prize these relics of mine, sure as my name is—" and here she chuckled softly to herself, "is Grandmother, for nobody calls me anything else—these days," she ended softly, but her eyes had a reminiscent look in them. She was listening to Grandfather's voice as he had called her lovingly by other names, in that

long ago. Grandmother stood in front of the mirror a moment—such a beautiful picture she made—the very ideal of ripened womanhood—soft, abundant, white hair; fresh, rosy-tinted skin; long, loose robe of creamy white; eighty years old, but a charming woman still. Yet Grandmother was not thinking of the picture in the glass, she was dreaming of *the girl* whom Grandfather had won so many years ago.

Just beside the mirror hung a hand-carved bracket on which rested a small but beautifully executed pastel of the man she mourned. The empty arms reached out again.

“Sweetheart, I miss you so,” she said aloud. There were tears in her eyes as she crossed the room and bent over a chest of antique design and workmanship, a chest once the property of a king, for Grandfather had been a court musician in his youth, and the chest was an heirloom from those days of music and success, when Grandmother had been his pupil before she became his wife.

The lifted lid disclosed a gown, a lacy, silken, time-yellowed gown. Grandmother took it up tenderly and kissed the lavender-scented folds. Shaking it out, it fell in billows around her. An impulse seized Grandmother, an impulse to wear once more her wedding gown, an impulse she had no desire, or power, to com-

bat. Soon she stood clad in a robe such as Juliet might have worn in Romeo's impassioned time. A lace veil, cobwebby and rare enough to suit a queen, Grandmother next pinned upon the masses of silver, as seemed her hair in the glimmering sheen of the moonlit room. Silk, hand-embroidered hose, and low heeled, big buckled, brocaded slippers she next unearthed. Then, making a quaint curtsy at the image she saw in the glass, she looked again at Grandfather's portrait, and behold, *he too was in his wedding garb!*

A sob caught in her throat, but she straightened her shoulders resolutely, and went back once again to the chest. Bending over, she brought to light an ebony violin case, which she unlocked with a key, worn upon a slender chain about her still softly curved neck. Tenderly Grandmother lifted out a violin of a kind so rare as to be worth a king's ransom, indeed, only a king could have given such, to a prince among performers, to a favorite of his court and realm! As if under the control of some unknown spirit Grandmother picked up the bow, then she crossed to the big chair in front of the fire, seated herself, with the precious Stradivarius across her knee. Grandmother's head drooped forward towards her breast, her eyes looked dreamily into the flames. Grandmother

was unconscious of the present and for that hour lived only in the past.

One! Two! Three! Four! Five! Six! Seven! Eight! Nine! Ten! 'Tis the big clock below the stairs telling the time. Grandmother, still with eyes intent upon the ashes and the coals, lifted the violin till her chin rested lovingly against the wood. Dreamily she raised the bow and moved it softly but deftly across the strings.

"For there's nobody just like you dear,
There's nobody just like you;
With your smiling face, and your tender grace,
Oh, there's nobody just like you."

That was the haunting melody she played, and the while she dreamed her lover seemed to say the words. Without abruptness the key changed.

"Each hour I spent with thee, dear heart,
Is as a string of pearls to me.
I count them over, every one apart,
My Rosary, My Rosary."

"Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer,
To still a heart in absence wrung,
I count them o'er unto the end
And there a cross is hung."

Except for the hand which held the bow, Grandmother was as motionless as a marble

statue, her eyes with intent fixed gaze always bent upon the flickering fire.

Suddenly, an ecstatic note crept into the music, for Grandmother saw a procession walking up the aisle to the strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March. Slowly, as if under hypnotic control she rose to her feet, and the victorious echoes of the master's creation filled the house. Still standing erect and without a noticeable break, a minor cadence crept into the tone of the magnificent instrument, but this minor chord soon lost itself in a lullaby, as old almost as the violin,

"Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed."

Grandmother was back in the big chair now, and she held the precious Stradivarius as *if it were a babe*. Soon a discord, a crash, a shriek of agony from the violin, and then the slow, solemn chant, the requiem for the dead! The tears chased each other adown Grandmother's cheeks, but the eyes never left the fire, nor did the hand slacken which drew the bow, and which soon brought forth from the heart of the violin, the comforting words, musically rendered, "A mighty fortress is our God." The tears ceased falling the while she played this

hymn over and over again. It was as if pictured in the flames before her Grandmother could once more live the years wherein God's grace had indeed been sufficient for all her needs.

The fire began to lose its sparkle, ashes were now more plentiful than coals, yet still the violin sang on, a peaceful, contented tone in all its notes; but now, hark! a minor chord! another, yet another, a soft, low, sobbing, plaintive appeal, dropping from the slow moving bow. Listen,

"I'm a'wearying for you,
Just a'wearying for you."

The moon became obscured; the shadows grew denser within; the music haunted the room; the chill of an autumnal midnight crept into the house. The clock below struck eleven times, its sonorous tone penetrating to the upper room, yet it remained unheard by the ears of the sole occupant, who still played on. No more were her eyes riveted upon the flames; they rested now upon the portrait of Grandfather, painted at the time when he held the homage of a continent as nothing compared to the love of the woman he had won. A shudder passed through Grandmother's frame. She rose, and as if

drawn by invisible hands, crossed the space between herself and the picture, playing a melody so sad and full of tears as to be almost unbearable. Then with eyes intent upon the portrait, she moved the bow gently, and the wail of a lost soul seeking for its mate filled every inch of space within the room.

“I hear you calling me,
I hear you calling me.”

Sobs shook the woman's frame, the music ceased. The bow dropped from her nerveless fingers. Grandmother gave a gasp of astonishment. She looked at the priceless violin held in her hand, at the portrait of “Father” on the wall, at her wedding finery, at the heap of discarded clothing upon a chair; at the wedding ring upon her still plump hand. Raising her eyes to the place where had rested the portrait of her mate, a look of glad surprise made her face positively beautiful, for before her stood a faint, but apparently living, breathing vision of her master, lover, husband. As she took one step forward, she thought the vision raised his hand; she thought she heard the Master's voice commanding, “Play.” Once again, as back in the years beyond recall, Grandmother raised the Stradivarius, once again she poised the bow.

A smile of joy and pride, a look of exultation, of homage for the artist soul which commanded her own—then the bow rested on the strings.

Grandmother was back in her twenties; she was once again in the Parisian studio playing for the *master* she adored. Notes positive and contradictory; notes weird yet tame; notes peaceable and bloodthirsty; notes half-silent, then noisy; notes hideous, then beautiful; fast flowed from the realm called "Memory Land." Subconsciously, controlled by the master mind of the mystic vision before her eyes, the woman played on and on. There was no time, no age, for her, wrapt in the music of a golden dream. No longer ballads and lullabies filled the room. Classics long forgotten came unbidden from Memory's chamber and her fingers played them as in the long ago. She stood erect, enraptured, a woman of striking dignity with the serene beauty of a ripened product of a great Creator's hand. She had played half-way through a selection. This without warning suddenly ceased. For a moment she paused arrested by a sudden idea—she looked up at the vision of the Master. A beautiful smile of understanding illuminated her countenance.

"So *this is the help I asked for?*" she said aloud. A look such as a mother gives a beloved child, she caught on the shadowy face outlined

before her; she noticed that the right hand was raised in the commanding attitude she knew so well—then, Grandmother shut her eyes and began once more to play. Words came too, which etched themselves upon her sensitive brain. Do you think she could forget them, these lines her master, lover, husband, guide, sent in answer to her prayer? She remembered softly humming to herself words which truly portrayed her own haunting but elusive ideas, when, with sudden snap, a string broke, then a second flew in twain. The musician's eyes went from the master's face to the violin, then back where the vision had stood. *There was nothing there.*

Grandmother paled and trembled. She took a step forward. Surely she was right, there was naught save Grandfather's portrait resting upon its usual shelf. A fog of regret, a wave of sickening memory, swept over her. With the violin clasped to her breast, she went close to the pictured face of master, lover, husband, lost one, and once again, as on that other night, her voice broke the stillness with heart-breaking words:

"Oh, sweetheart of the long ago, I miss you so, I miss you so! Every day I tell you a 'good morning,' and every night, when the lamps are lighted, I send you my 'good night.' Some

women forget, I know, dear! but *you* will *always* fill *my* heart! Good night! Good night! Good night!"

A fit of trembling seized her. She reached out and gathered "Father's" portrait into her arms where it lay crushed against the violin. She looked towards the window where, in the dying rays of moonlight, there seemed to hover a shadowy form; she took a step or two, but she felt faint and dizzy.

"I'm coming with you now, darling; this is my last night alone. I'm coming—dear!" the voice ceased. A gentle fall, a silence; and in the moonlight a little heap of wedding clothes, rare violin and "Father's" portrait. But Grandmother was not there. She had crossed over the Great Divide. * * * Nestling against her heart they found these words:

GOOD BYE, SWEET DAY, GOOD BYE.

As I watch the twilight shadows
Fall aslant my window pane

I am thinking of my loved one,
Longing for him once again.

Years ago, it was, we parted
In another twilight dim;

Never, now, a day-time passes
But my soul cries out for him.

Good bye, sweet day, good bye.

Good bye, sweet day, good bye—
Just as oft as twilight shadows
Creep a-down the heavens I scan,
My sad soul cries out its anguish
And my tears fall fast like rain;
Thus, sweet day, thy twilight shadows,
As they fall, so calm and still,
Bring, each day, the same soul hunger
Which God's made no power to kill.
Good bye, sweet day, good bye.

Good bye, sweet day, good bye—
Soon there'll be no twilight shadows
To be dreaded day by day;
There'll be naught but golden sunshine
And the bliss of love alway.
Then I will have joined mine own one
And belong to him for aye,
Since the souls by God united,
Find each other, come what may.
Good bye, sweet day, good bye.





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